



DOH-PINELLAS IDENTIFIES CASE OF HEPATITIS A IN FOOD SERVICE WORKER; ENCOURAGES VACCINATION

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The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) has identified a positive case of hepatitis A in a food service worker in St. Petersburg.

DOH-Pinellas conducted an epidemiological investigation and today determined an individual who worked at the Derby Club at Derby Lane, 10490 Gandy Blvd. N., St. Petersburg, may have been infectious.

The hepatitis A vaccine may provide protection against the disease if given within two weeks after exposure. Therefore, the hepatitis A vaccination is recommended for anyone who ate or drank at this restaurant between **Monday, September 16 and Wednesday, September 18**. Those who consumed food or beverage between **Saturday, September 7 and Sunday, September 15** should instead observe for signs and symptoms of hepatitis A infection. This includes sudden onset of abdominal discomfort, nausea, vomiting, dark urine, fever, diarrhea, pale white stools, or yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). Anyone experiencing these symptoms should promptly seek medical attention.

If you previously have received the hepatitis A vaccine or have had a past history of hepatitis A infection, you are considered immune to the hepatitis A virus and do not need to take additional action.

Those with specific questions about exposure to hepatitis A at Derby Club at Derby Lane can call (727) 824-6932 to reach the DOH-Pinellas Epidemiology staff.

DOH-Pinellas is encouraging all healthcare providers, including hospital emergency departments to stay on high alert and immediately report cases of hepatitis A to DOH-Pinellas, as well as identify those who would benefit from vaccination.

Contact your county's health department for hepatitis A vaccinations if you live outside Pinellas County. Vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A. People who should be vaccinated for hepatitis A include:

- All children at the age of 12 months
- People who are experiencing homelessness
- Users of recreational drugs, whether injected or not
- Men who have sexual encounters with other men
- People with direct contact with others who have hepatitis A
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common

- People with chronic / long-term liver disease, including hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- People with clotting-factor disorders
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common

DOH-Pinellas continues to offer the hepatitis A vaccine at no cost and without an appointment at these clinic locations from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays:

- **Tarpon Springs: 301 S. Disston Ave.**
- **Clearwater: 310 N. Myrtle Ave.**
- **Mid-County: 8751 Ulmerton Rd., Largo**
- **Pinellas Park: 6350 76th Ave. N.**
- **St. Petersburg: 205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N**

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious disease that attacks the liver. People infected with hepatitis A are most contagious from two weeks before onset of symptoms to one week afterwards. Not everyone who is infected will have all the symptoms. Symptoms usually start within 28 days of exposure to the virus with a range of 15-50 days. Symptoms can include:

- Jaundice (yellowing skin and whites of eyes)
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue/tired
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Dark-colored urine
- Pale or clay colored stool

How is hepatitis A treated or hepatitis A infection prevented?

Hepatitis A vaccine is the best method of preventing infection.

Practicing good hand hygiene plays an important role in preventing the spread of hepatitis A.

Use soap and running water and wash for at least 20 seconds, wash hands after changing a diaper or caring for a person, and wash hands before preparing, serving or eating food.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers do not kill the hepatitis A virus.

No medicines can cure the disease once symptoms appear. People with hepatitis A symptoms should seek medical care immediately.

Most people get better over time but may need to be hospitalized.

Previous infection with hepatitis A provides immunity for the rest of a person's life.

People that are exposed to hepatitis A may be given vaccine or immune globulin within 14 days of exposure to prevent infection.

How Hepatitis A is Investigated by the Department of Health

After a case of hepatitis A has been reported to the FDOH by a health care provider, a county health department (CHD) epidemiologist will interview the individual and collect information regarding the timeline of their previous 50 days, including travel, occupation, drug use, food history and more. The epidemiologist will then identify close contacts of the ill person. If given within 14 days, the hepatitis A vaccine will help prevent infection among anyone exposed to the virus. As with the national outbreak, the majority of cases of hepatitis A in Florida are close contacts of persons experiencing homelessness or persons who use or inject drugs. Less than 5% of cases have been identified among food workers. To date, FDOH has not identified a case of hepatitis A transmission from a food worker to a restaurant patron.

Go to www.Pinellas.FloridaHealth.gov or call (727) 824-6900 for information about DOH-Pinellas. Follow us on Twitter [@HealthyPinellas](https://twitter.com/HealthyPinellas).

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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